

news
@
westhill
Sep
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2019



Report From Your Board Chair

Greetings to all. I am hoping that the summer provided lots of opportunities to unwind, relax a bit and enjoy the fine summer weather. Perhaps you had the chance to travel, get to a cottage or resort, or just have a “staycation” near home. For a few months at least, we get to see what it would be like to live in Florida, Arizona or Panama all year round.

Our summer services continued every Sunday with some typical West Hill moments. Gretta and Scott enjoyed a few weeks off and got to their annual retreat in Upper New York State. With additional vacation time and study leave, Gretta took a break in August while Scott coordinated the services. The conductors and welcome readers came from our members. It was wonderful to see how the attendance stayed quite strong during the summer. We welcomed back Annie who returned to the office after a leave of absence. We appreciate that Kathleen Blakey and Lian Chan helped out during Annie’s absence.

The parking lot repairs are still pending but our Property Chair, Gary Megson, is confident that we will have this project completed soon. Recall that this project has been Board approved and we have the funds available.

Special Congregational Meeting, Tuesday, September 10, 2019
Pot Luck Desserts 6:30; Meeting 7:00

Conversations continue regarding our financial status and the ability of our congregation to be able to afford to keep and maintain our property. For at least 2 years, we have seen our monthly and annual revenues, including offerings and donations, being less than our expenses. We have been able to obtain some relief from the Shining Waters Regional Council to help with the major roof repair and other expenses. Other fundraising activities, including concerts, Spring Market bazaar, and efforts from the crafty ladies and others, have provided additional support for our church. In addition, we have continued to try to increase rental incomes from events and also ongoing rental space with only poor to modest results. Despite these measures, we continue to operate from a deficit position and it is only because of our contingency/reserve account that we have been able to make ends meet. This source of revenue is shrinking each month. We started with about \$75,000 in 2017 and are now down to under \$40,000. The trend is clear. We will not be able to carry on unless we can reverse this pattern by increasing our revenues or greatly reducing our expenses. The current proposal is to sell our church and property and to use those funds to rent a smaller property and look at doing more community outreach projects. Much discussion needs to take place so that we might come out of the September meeting with an action plan and a vision that will keep our community viable and sustainable.

Continue the journey.

Michael Lawrie, Chair

First Nations Study Group ~ Fall 2019

Meetings will begin in the fall on **the last Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m.** with the following themes:

September 30th: Orange Shirt Day. Everyone is invited to wear an orange shirt in recognition of the harm the residential school system did to children's sense of self-esteem and wellbeing, and as an affirmation of our commitment to ensure that everyone around us matters. (See Phyllis' story below). Please also wear an orange shirt to church on Sunday, September 29th.

October 28th: This meeting will focus on The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call on Provincial and Territorial Governments, in collaboration with survivors and their organizations to commission and install "a publicly accessible, highly visible, residential schools monument in each capital city to honour survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities." We will endeavour to learn more about the 17 residential schools that operated in Ontario.

November 25th: "Urban.Indigenous.Proud" We will be watching five brief documentaries by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and the National Film Board of Canada, produced by Indigenous filmmakers who set out to explore urban Indigenous culture and lived experiences in five Friendship Centre communities. The films celebrate successes in urban Indigenous communities and give Canadians an opportunity to learn more about Indigenous people living in urban settings. The films also challenge stereotypes by offering stories created by Indigenous communities.

Phyllis (Jack) Webstad's story, in her own words...

I went to the Mission for one school year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to the Mission school. I remember going to Robinson's store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting – just like I felt to be going to school!

When I got to the Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me; it was mine! The color orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared, and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.

I was 13.8 years old and in grade 8 when my son Jeremy was born. Because my grandmother and mother both attended residential school for 10 years each, I never knew what a parent was supposed to be like. With the help of my aunt, Agness Jack, I was able to raise my son and have him know me as his mother.

I went to a treatment centre for healing when I was 27 and have been on this healing journey since then. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at the mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years. Even now, when I know nothing could be further than the truth, I still sometimes feel that I don't matter; even with all the work I've done! I am honored to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.



IN THE SPIRIT



Yoga Studio & Wine Lounge



REMINDER — YOGA CLASSES (SENIORS DISCOUNT). We still offer special seniors classes (yoga in chairs and for those with mobility issues) Mondays at 10:15-11:15 a.m. and Thursdays 9:00-10:00 a.m. (\$15/class includes tea/coffee & cookies). (Highland Creek Plaza, 376 Old Kingston Road)

We have many more options for all ages. Please check out our website for our class schedule, rates and more information (647-352-4879): www.inthespirtityoga.com, email letsconnect@inthespirtityoga.com



Today...

Phyllis Webstad is Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band). She comes from mixed Secwepemc and Irish/French heritage, was born in Dog Creek, and lives in Williams Lake, BC. Today, Phyllis is married, has one son, a step-son and three grandsons.

She earned diplomas in Business Administration from the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and in Accounting from Thompson Rivers University. Phyllis received the 2017 TRU Distinguished Alumni Award for her unprecedented impact on local, provincial, national and international communities through the sharing of her orange shirt story.

submitted by Ruth Gill for First Nations Study Group

Women, Let's Dine!

Interested in having some time with other women in the congregation? Time that connects with both your heart and your mind? Feel the need for a deeper conversation than Sunday coffee allows? Have a desire to get to know other women a little bit better?

For many years, West Hill has had two women's groups meeting on a regular basis: the Labyrinth walkers who meet in the back parking lot on Tuesday mornings and the Crafty Ladies who gather Tuesday afternoons to work on their crafts together and ultimately raise a ton of money for the church. If you aren't one of them or quite sure who they are, let me share their secret: they are the women in the congregation who are rich in friendship, connection, wellbeing, and love. They have fallen in love with being together, the magic elixir for strengthening personal wellbeing. You can see it on Sundays. They are the people who practically glow.

Not everyone has Tuesdays free, though, and not everyone's interests turn toward crafts or walking the labyrinth; we know that. And if we could bottle the side effects of their time together, we'd patent it and sell it in the Kiosk! Alas, no tech will brew that sort of potion.

We can do the next best thing, however, by providing another opportunity to bring women together during the week to engage around a topic, listen to one another's stories, or simply come to know one another better. So, we have begun to enjoy supper gatherings on the **third Thursday evening of the month, September through June**. This also coincides well with choir practices, which take place Thursday evenings from October through May.

Pot lucks are great, but they also require some coordination, always take time for people to prepare, and often end up with leftovers the group needs to address. With that in mind, we are suggesting you bring your own supper with you; if you have some to share, you're welcome to offer it. Don't stay away if you don't have time to make something; we'll manage to fill a plate or two with what we've brought individually. We just want you to come!

~ gretta



14th Annual Progressive Dinner Saturday October 26, 2019

5:45 – 6:45 Appetizers and fruit punch at the church
6:45 – 7:00 Travel to host home for main course
7:00 – 8:45 Dine at host home
9:00 Dessert at the church

Cost: \$15.00 per person (to be collected at church prior to appetizer course). Please also bring a contribution to the Community Food Basket.

Details:
4 to 6 guests will enjoy the main course at a host home. The hosts will phone their guests prior to the evening to personally invite them for dinner. Guests will contribute their choice of appetizers, vegetables, salads or desserts.

**Sign up sheets are available in the WHU lobby.
Please contact Barb Russell for further information.**

We hope you will join us!

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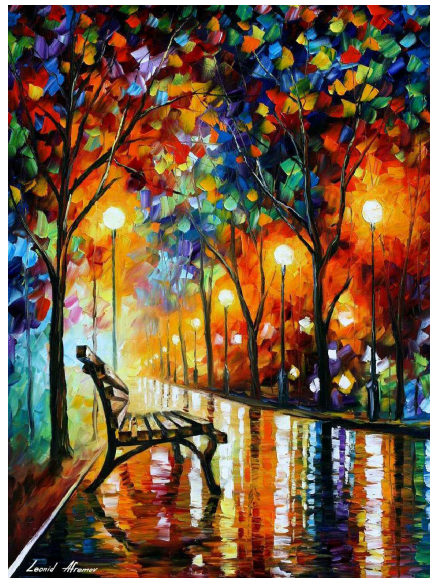


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Outreach Committee Autumn 2019

During August and September, the committee supports the Family Shelter on Kingston Road by providing school supplies needed by the children of families in residence there. These children attend local schools at various grade levels, and need the things that every school-aged child requires: backpacks, lunch bags, water bottles, as well as pencils, pencil sharpeners, paper, crayons, erasers, glue sticks, and for older students, binders, calculators and geometry sets. An Outreach Committee member accepted all of the school supplies and cash donations for this purpose at Sunday services in August. Members of the Committee shopped the back-to-school sales and delivered the results to the Shelter before school began.

Autumn is the season of Thanksgiving and the Outreach Committee focuses on increasing our donations to the local Food Bank. During the summer many families are away and donations of canned and packaged foods to the Red Basket dwindle to a very few. Usually by September the shelves at the Food Bank are empty, but with cooler weather and children back in school the need becomes very apparent, so we will check with the Food Bank to find out their particular needs and encourage the congregation to renew their donations to our Red Basket.

Outreach will soon be considering plans for Christmas. Usually we are contacted by the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities which conducts a program for local families in need. We will be considering how we may participate. The Outreach Committee welcomes your interest and would be happy to welcome new members to join the committee.

submitted by Dorothy Hirheley for the Outreach Committee



10th Annual Holiday Bazaar

Saturday November 16, 2019
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Featuring...

- *lunch room and coffee house
- *baked goods and preserves
- *frozen foods
- *attic treasures, jewellery, books and houseplants
- *gift baskets, large and small
- *crafts created by our Crafty Ladies
- *raffle of new and re-gifted items
- *Nearly New Fashion Boutique featuring gently-used seasonal clothing
- *free draw ticket for a seasonal plant with every donation to our community food basket

Our annual bazaar is always an exciting time with lots planned and so much to do...
Please help by joining the bazaar team!

Contact Barb Russell for further details.

Upcoming Special Events

Tuesday, September 10	Special Congregational Meeting, 6:30 PM
Sunday, September 29.....	Orange Shirt Sunday (see article on page 2)
Saturday, October 26.....	Progressive Dinner
Saturday, November 16.....	Holiday Bazaar

Please check out Shining Waters Regional Council's new community events page
at <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/events/>

Regular Services, Meetings and Ongoing Events

SUNDAYS

Every Sunday	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
First Sunday of every month	Visitors' and Travellers' Lunch	12:00 PM

MONDAYS

September 9 & 23 and October 7 & 27	Men's Spirituality Group	7:00 PM
Last Monday of every month.....	First Nations Study Group Meeting	1:00 PM

TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday, resuming September 10	Labyrinth Walk	10:30 AM
.....	Holiday Crafting	1:00 PM
First Tuesday of every month, resuming October 1	Board Meeting	7:00 PM

THURSDAYS

Third Thursday of every month	Women, Let's Dine	5:30 PM
Every Thursday (Oct-Jun), resuming October 17	Choir Practice	7:30 PM

FRIDAYS

Last Friday of every month	Dinner with Friends	6:00 PM
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West Hill United Board of Directors for 2019

Board Chair: Michael Lawrie
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Finance Chair: Frank Kilroy
Property Chair: Gary Megson
Ministry & Personnel Chair: Jan Garvey
Ministers at Large: Dennis Hollingshead, Ruth Gill, Deb Ellis
Presbytery Reps: Louise Lawrie, Annemarie Leepel
Minister: Gretta

There are other Board Positions that are vacant.
If you are interested in joining the WHU Board, please call the office.

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